

**Abstract 462**

**TITLE:** Establishing HIV Partner Services for Individuals at Greatest Risk of Infection  
California's Experience

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**ISSUE:** Federal funding requirements dictate that states make a good faith effort to notify spouses of HIV-positive persons of their exposure to HIV. The California Office of AIDS (OA) has responded to this mandate by developing a statewide HIV Partner Counseling and Referral Services (PCRS) program which offers PCRS to all HIV-positive persons who are identified in HIV counseling and testing sites and early intervention services, regardless of their past or present marital status. In order to effectively serve partners, staff must have experience in contact elicitation and field notification. Partner elicitation is not a routine component in HIV prevention, care and treatment programs. The expertise lies within the Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control and Local Assistance (LAB) Branches that fall under a different division in the California department of health programs. This distinction between staff expertise is also common throughout local public health programs and poses a significant challenge to the collaborative development of an effective, multidimensional intervention that requires training, standardized procedures, data collection, and team building with staff from various HIV and STD prevention and treatment programs.

**SETTING:** HIV/STD prevention and treatment service providers in public, private and community-based medical venues.

**PROJECT:** California has developed four major components of the PCRS program: 1) written operational guidance, 2) collection system, 3) HIV and STD counselor trainings, and 4) five pilot PCRS projects in high-incidence counties. PCRS has conducted various review and input processes: statewide surveys; expert review committee of federal, state and local administrators from HIV, STD, and LAB; collaborative training with the STD Control Branch; and 11 supervisor orientation meetings.

**RESULTS:** Because of networking and collaboration, two PCRS trainings have been developed, one each for HIV and STD program staff. Both trainings include a domestic violence component to provide participants with knowledge and skills in this very critical and related area. HIV PCRS Guidelines have been developed for review by local programs. Five PCRS pilot projects have been established that provide staff for direct assistance, collection of data, and evaluation of county activities. The pilots will meet on a triannual basis to discuss programmatic issues, barriers, successes, etc.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** With training and administrative support, HIV and STD programs can work together to serve partners at risk. In order for PCRS efforts to succeed, administrative collaboration between HIV and STD is imperative.

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